

REMARKS

Favorable reconsideration is respectfully requested.

The claims are 1, 5-10, 14 and 15.

The above amendment is responsive to points set forth in the Official Action.

In the above amendment, the feature of claim 4 has incorporated in claim 1 and the feature of claim 13 has been incorporated in claim 10.

The significance of this amendment will be apparent from the remarks below.

Claims 1-3, 6-12, 14-15 are rejected under 35 USC 102(b) as being clearly anticipated by Barzynski et al. (US 4,555,471).

This rejection is respectfully traversed.

It is apparent that this rejection is inapplicable to the present claims since claim 4 which has not been rejected has been incorporated in claim 1 and claim 13 which has not been rejected has been incorporated in claim 10.

The reason why this reference is inapplicable to the claims will now be discussed.

The purpose of the above amendment is to define the deactivation of the ultraviolet absorbability of the mask layer by way of infrared irradiation that takes place along with ablation of said mask layer.

Therefore, by such a co-use of the ablation by infrared irradiation together with the deactivation of the ultraviolet absorbability, the ultraviolet transparency of the infrared irradiated area can be further improved compared to the ultraviolet transparency of the irradiated area obtained only by the deactivation of the ultraviolet absorbability by infrared irradiation.

A further advantage of the present method is the ability to form a mask image layer having high contrast without roughening the surface of the photosensitive resin layer therebeneath (see page 9, line 18 to page 10, line 18 of the present specification).

Barzynski et al. discloses that by using an IR laser with a wavelength greater than 1 μm for irradiating a pattern in a mask forming layer, there is a decrease in absorption power towards light rays having a wavelength of 300 to 420 nm. However, nothing whatsoever is disclosed regarding the ablation that takes place along with deactivation, such as that of the present invention.

Furthermore, regarding the rejection of previous claims 1-3, 6-12 and 14-15

as being anticipated by Barzynski and therefore lacking novelty, nothing whatever is mentioned about the ablation that takes place along with deactivation as recited in previous claim 4 which has been incorporated in claim 1.

Claims 1-2, 4-11 and 13-15 are rejected under 35 USC 102(b) as being anticipated by Van Zoeren (US 5,506,086).

This rejection is also respectfully traversed.

Van Zoeren et al. discloses a conventional construction in which a mask pattern is achieved by irradiating and ablating a mask layer with an IR laser is disclosed on page 4, line 20 to page 5, line 12 of the present specification, but nothing whatsoever is disclosed regarding the point of deactivation of the ultraviolet absorbability of the mask layer by way of infrared irradiation.

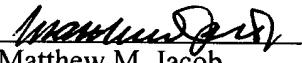
For the foregoing reasons, it is apparent that the rejections in prior art are untenable and should be withdrawn.

No further issues remaining, allowance of this application is respectfully requested.

If the Examiner has any comments or proposals for expediting prosecution, please contact undersigned at the telephone number below.

Respectfully submitted,

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